

A N 3
EXAMINATION

Concerning the Great

S I N

Of Taking the

Name of GOD

In Vain.

L O N D O N,

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Smithfield. 1716.

Price One Penny.

AN
EXAMINATION
Concerning the Great

STAIN

the
BRITISH MUSEUM
NATHAN GOD

LONDON

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in Bartholomew Close near West
Smithfield. 1716

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EXAMINATION

Concerning the great Sin of
taking the Name of God in
Vain.

Question.



What part of Scripture
are we forbidden to take
the Name of God in
vain?

Ans. In the Third Command-
ment. Thou shalt not take the
Name of the Lord thy God in
vain. For the Lord will not hold
him guiltless that taketh his Name
in vain.

Quest. When do Men take the
Name of God in vain?

Ans. When they use it to any
idle or wicked Purpose whatever;

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When they speak of God, or of
his Word, or Worship, after a jest-
ing and careless Way.

Also when they pray to God,
or call upon him without Devo-
tion, or minding what they say.

But especially when they Swear
falsly, or in common Discourse;
and when they use the Name of
God, or his Word, in Charms, or
in Curses, or in making Vows a-
bout Trifles.

Quest. What is the meaning of
that Expression, The Lord will not
hold him guiltless?

Ans. The meaning is, that this
Sin shall be certainly punished, and
more than Words can express;
However common it is, and little
regarded.

Quest. Tho' we may not Swear by
the Name of God; Is it a Sin to
Swear by any other Oath?

Ans. Our Blessed Saviour ex-
pressly forbids all Swearing in com-
mon Discourse, let the Oaths seem
never so innocent.

Quest. What are the Oaths you mean?

Ans. To Swear by one's Faith, by one's Life, by the Heavens, and the like; a Custom which is very sinful, and which will expose us to the Wrath of God.

Quest. Is it a Sin to repeat the Name of God, or Lord, or Jesus, in our ordinary Discourse?

Ans. It is most certainly a great Sin to mention it on trivial Occasions; and without an awful Regard and Reverence. It is well known how great a Veneration was payed by the Jews to a Name so Great, Wonderful, and Holy. They would not let it enter even into their Religious Discourses. How deplorable is it then, that so impious a Custom should prevail among Christians; that Persons, who are otherwise Conscientious and Religious, should allow themselves in profaning that Tremendous Name on the most trivial, and slight Occasions!

Quest.

Quest. What are the Profanations you mean; give me some Instances of them?

Ans. By taking God's Name in vain, is to be understood, not only saying in common Discourse, and without need, these Words—O God, O Lord, O Jesus, O Christ, good God, good Lord, or the like; but also using these Expressions—God Bless you, God Help you, God Love you, Christ Bless your Soul, and the like. For tho' these Expressions are Good in themselves, yet they are not to be used but in a Religious Manner. They are so many short Prayers, and therefore are to be used Reverently and Devoutly, and upon proper and serious Occasions; whenever they are not so used, they are abused after a sinful Manner. To cry God Bless you, do this, or that silly, or perhaps wicked Thing; what is it but to take God's Name in vain; and to affront him in a high Degree?

In a Word, as to Pray to God, for a Blessing on another, in a serious

ous and reverend Manner, is a great Act of Piety ; so to cry, God Bless you, (or the like) in a laughing, jesting, or otherwise irreverend Manner, is a great Act of Impiety. And many of the Expressions are dreadful Oaths, which are not always accounted so ; as when they appeal to God, in saying, *God knows* — in trivial Matters ; and when they use half Words, a little to disguise the Oaths.

Quest. But many People think, that provided they do not Swear by the Name of God, it is no great Harm to allow themselves to use it on the most trivial Occasions ?

Ans. It is for want of due Consideration, that any Persons, who profess a Regard to the Dictates of our Holy Religion, should allow themselves in so profane a Custom. We are frequently taught in Scripture, that God's Name is Holy ; particularly Psalm cxi. Verse 9. Holy and Reverend is his Name. His Name is Holy, that is, never to be used but on Holy or Religious Occasions. His Name is Reverend, that

is, never to be used, even on holy Occasions, but with Reverence. And therefore it is an amazing Consideration, a most wonderful Artifice of the Devil, so to bring things about, that Persons otherwise Religious, and who particularly abhor Swearing and Cursing, and actually abstain from them, should yet fall into, and live in the sinful Freedom of taking the Name of God in vain; notwithstanding they have the contrary Duty so frequently inculcated in Scripture; and have the Ten Commandments in particular read to them at least every Week; and both hear and say themselves the Lord's Prayer several Times every Day.

Quest. What is there in the Lord's Prayer, that reproveth Swearing, or taking the Name of God in vain?

Ans. The very first Petition of this most excellent and comprehensive Prayer is, *Hallowed be thy Name.* Whereby is plainly denoted, that the hallowing the Name of God, is a Duty of the first Rank; and consequently, the not hallowing, or taking

king in vain the Name of God, must be a Sin of the first Rank.

Quest. Can there be any further Inferences drawn from the Lord's Prayer, to the same Purpose?

Ans. Yes, we are taught in that most Divine Prayer, to pray daily, *That God's Will may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.* And therefore since the Angels are proposed to our Imitation; the awful Reverence payed to the Supreme Being, by those excellent Spirits, who (as *St. Peter* tells us) are greater in Power and Might than we; ought to admonish us of the profound Respect we Mortals owe him; and should teach us, that whensoever we speak either to God, or of him; we ought to be inwardly affected (and in our outward Expressions appear to be so) with the unmeasurable Distance there is, between a most Perfect and Omnipotent Creator, and a poor, impotent Creature.

Quest. Is not our being taught to Pray to our Father in Heaven, another Intimation of that profound Reverence

verence we ought to feel in our selves, and express both in our Words and Behaviour, whenever we approach the Divine Majesty ?

Ans. Yes, the infinite Distance between God and us, should teach us to approach him with the Humility of a Suppliant; with that Awe that becomes a frail Creature, a miserable Sinner, before his Creator, and his Judge. And since even our Hymns, and Praises of God, deserve our Blushes, and need his Pardon; it is a sad Consideration to think what Confusion will one Day cover the Faces of those that do not only speak slightly and carelessly, but oftentimes contemptuously, and perhaps drossingly, of that Supreme, and infinitely perfect Being! to whom they owe those very Faculties, and that Wit which they so ungratefully, as well as impiously, misemploy.

Quest. What can we then think of those, who make use of so tremendous a Name in Oaths and Curses; in the ordinary Expressions of their Anger, Mirth, and most impertinent Passions;

of those who admit it into the most familiar Questions and Answers; and of those, who violate it by solemn Perjuries?

Ans. It would be an Affront to Reason, to endeavour to set forth the Horror and Profaneness of such a Practice. The very mention of it, sufficiently exposes it to those, in whom the Light of Nature, not to say Religion, is not utterly extinguished. For what can be such prodigious Folly and Madness, as for one who has Life and Death set before him, and knows the dreadful Threatnings which are denounced against this Sin, to chuse to Affront Almighty God, and expose his own Soul to eternal Damnation, for a Sin, which brings him neither Profit nor Pleasure, or any other Advantage! And therefore is a Sin without Temptation; and consequently without Excuse; for it shews the greatest Contempt, nay Unkindness, to God, to provoke him thus without any thing to tempt us to it. And therefore tho' the commonness of this Sin hath

hath made it pass but for a small one ; yet it is very far from being so, either in itself, or in God's Account.

Quest. Whereby may the Danger of this Sin, of using the Name of God in a slight and vain Manner, further appear?

Ans. By considering, not only the Affront that is hereby offer'd to God, who is known by his Names and Titles ; but also the Mischief that this Sin, in its own Nature and Tendency, does to the Sinner, by hindring him from or in the Worship of God, in that it takes off his Heart from all Reverence or Awe of God therein. It is the Spight that the Devil has to the Worship of God, that makes him so earnest in tempting Men to so foolish an Impiety. It is well known, that the solemn and reverend Use of the Name of God is necessary to the right Performance of the Ordinances of Divine Worship ; now Familiarity breeds Contempt ; and they that jest with the Name of God, and Lord, and Jesus, from Day to Day, in every Fit of Mirth

Mirth or Anger, can never give him the Glory due unto his Name, or fear the dreadful Name, the Lord our God, when they should call upon, or adore him.

Quest. Many People do not look upon this Sin to be so great, and dangerous as you speak of?

Answ. That is because they do not believe the Word of God, or they are careless, and do not mind their Salvation, or think of a Life to come. But the Threatnings of God, will certainly be fulfilled, whether People believe them or not. And therefore all the Reason, and all the Wisdom in the World, obliges those who desire to flee from the Wrath to come, to keep clear of a Sin which will put them out of God's Favour at the present, and will, if they continue in it, cast them into Hell for ever.

Quest. What is the Duty of one, who is sensible of his Sin, and sorry for it?

Answ. He must confess his Sin, and earnestly beg Pardon of Almighty God. And that he may ef-

fectually

fectually break it off for the future, (without which his sorrowful Sense of it will but little avail him,) he must not only make the firmest Resolutions against it, but avoid all the Occasions that used to ensnare him; and endeavour, by the Sincerity of his Reformation, to reduce those whom his bad Example may have led into Sin. He must earnestly implore the Divine Assistance, to strengthen and enforce all his good Resolutions, and faithfully use the Grace that is afforded him. And then he may cheerfully hope his former Transgressions will be blotted out, and he will receive such seasonable Succours, as will enable him to surmount all Difficulties: And *being Faithful unto Death, He will certainly receive a Crown of Life*



Mo2 Lib Lb 4 2 2008
A Prayer for the Fear of
GOD.

O Glorious Majesty! who only art
High, and to be feared, possess
our Souls with a Holy Awe and Reve-
rence of Thee, that we may give Thee
the Honour due to Thy Name, and
may bear such a Respect to all Things
which relate to Thee, that we may
never profane any Holy Thing. Fill
us with a Religious Awe of Oaths, in
which the Honour of Thy Name is so
highly concerned. Grant that we may never
have awful Thoughts of Thee; that
we may never mention Thy Venerable
Name, unless on Solemn, Just, and
Devout Occasions: And may never
mention it on those Occasions, without
Reverence, Love, and Adoration. Hear
us, O Lord, we beseech Thee, and put
Thy Fear into our Hearts, that we may
never depart from Thee; but may with
Fear and Trembling work out our own
Salvation, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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